

Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission

20 April 2015– Minutes

Present:

Members: Hiel Lindquist, Paul Kotila (Chair), Rick Brackett, Dorothy Zug, Barbara Green, Mandy Exel

Absent: Cheryl Norskey

Guests: Eric Radlof, Frank Bequaert,

Review of Minutes 16 March 2015:

Approved as amended. All in favor.

Agenda Review:

WGTF & trail maps – Green

Metzger TF Stewardship Plan – Eric Radlof:

Radlof from Bay State Forestry Service presented a walk-through of the plan and maps, saying he would field any questions. He said the plan looks at the property in a macro and micro level. Members pointed out an error on page 3 stating that Lakeville Shores “owns”, rather than “owned” two pieces of the property. Radlof responded that it was a simple typo and the document is a final product that will not be changed.

The Board of Selectmen entered to meet with us for a pre-scheduled meeting at 7:15 p.m., but finding us occupied left at 7:20.

Radlof said the report includes elements that are required on every management plan. Further details are in the appendix at the end. Asked if we would work out access points with the forester, he said yes. We’d also work out the location of the landings. Radlof noted that invasive species were so sparse they were not documented. There is some glossy buckthorn that is lightly distributed. They did not identify any endangered species but saw a possibility that some might exist.

Rte. 119 is the main point of entry or access. A second point is off Old Troy Rd. and a third is off Turner Rd., though beaver activity there currently prevents access. Asked if restrictions on cutting next to wetlands were included in the plan, Radlof said no. It is included under best management practices. White pine & red oak are the top three species found. They also saw a lot of red spruce, which is unusual.

Pg. 16 is the management plan itself. Pg. 41 has a glossary of forestry terms. The forester would like the landing area close to 119. Recommendations, such as for an uneven age harvest (stand 2), shelterwood thinning, etc. follow the descriptions of each of ten stands designated in the plan. Asked what an uneven harvest would look like, Radlof said it would be “group tree/single tree,” with 25% of the basal area removed. This is the least intrusive approach. Number seven is the biggest stand—hemlock/hardwood. Asked about missing text in the second paragraph of its description, Radlof said he didn’t know what words were missing, but guessed it was “wet areas”. Members complained that this omission was more than a typo, but Radlof made no concession about changing this. Asked where the possible gravel area is located, he said it’s in stands 7 and 8.

Kotila said that the Commission was not in any position to make an immediate decision on this plan. Members should individually look through the plan and later look at the area.

Radlof said we would need DES approval for any new wetland crossings. Stand 7 could create wildlife habitat – we could get a wildlife biologist, and the plan would address our objectives. The management plan is based on a 10-year planning philosophy calling for an inventory every 10 years. They also need to consider aesthetics. The management schedule is from 2015-2020. Project areas are susceptible to weather events after harvest. It could be reassessed at the end of 2025. Timber sales are most often figured on a per-acre basis, with the costs rolled into it. The company charges an hourly rate for specific meetings, a pre-harvest walk, etc. Asked if the timber sale will come close to the cost of services, Radlof replied that any timber sale would generate more than the cost of services. The market has risen in the last 5 years. No cost to the town is anticipated.

Numbered points of interest indicated on the plan include the lowland spruce and peat land area as having a high wildlife potential. Endangered species (Canada lynx, for instance) might be found there, said Radlof. It might be a good location for a bench. Point 5 is the highest elevation with good view potential. Other points cite signs of moose, dense spruce cover for deer, etc. Asked if trails could be laid out before any harvesting is done, Radlof said it has been done that way. Radlof ended his presentation, saying members could email him any comments or questions.

Members then discussed the plan and presentation. Some expressed disappointment with the forester's attitude and the plan itself, which seemed focused more on harvesting timber than creating recreational and educational opportunities. Brackett noted that we had initially were to work with Dan Cyr, who passed away. We were not notified that Radlof was put in charge of the project. Brackett will look at Bay State's hierarchy to see who might be a better point person. Kotila will draft a letter of complaint to the company. Members will schedule an extra meeting in a couple of weeks via email. Sable will keep one copy of the plan for our files and give the other to Sandra Gillis.

WGTF -- Frank Bequaert:

Bequaert congratulated the Commission on successful passage of its article at Town Meeting and suggested we think about a specific long-term plan to build funds. The Commission should try to determine how much we think we need each year, factoring in any money received from the current use fund. No c.u. funds came in this year. There was a discussion about the history of our financial status. The WGTF management plan was never fully implemented and didn't focus much on timber sales. Bequaert also reported that he and the AMC are putting together a webpage for the Metacomet section of the NH trail. The WGTF could be featured on a mini web page that people could go to when looking for various hikes while on the trail.

Green added that she had met with Coni Porter to make necessary changes to the WGTF maps and asked Bequaert for clarification on a portion of the Rhododendron/ WG loop, which he provided.

Brackett added that he did a monitoring visit for the Conservancy with a volunteer last Thursday. They walked the boundaries and came back on the trail, checked the logbook, picked up trash, and found the map box empty. Someone had dumped a dead housecat on

the trail within 50 feet of the parking area. Brackett encouraged others to keep an eye out for this type of activity.

Zug reported that a land owner to the west of the former Menard property is asking \$95,000 for 10 acres fronting on a beaver pond. Members suggested he donate an easement or lower the price.

Prime Wetlands Project Status:

Kotila has gotten a couple of RFP's as examples from other towns. They must be blended to reflect what we want.

Selectmen returned at 8:40 p.m., saying they wanted to have a discussion of the Prime Wetlands RFP. S. Silverman said that we need to move things along. Kotila said he could give it a stab and send it to them. Debbie could contact other towns. Kotila has samples from Chichester and Hampton, which he will forward to her in email. The Select board wants all of us to be looking at them. Kotila said he could come up with an approximate, with input from Selectmen on specifics like when and how often to meet, etc.

Holman suggested a DES workshop might help. Could we have a point person on each committee? There is a workshop on vernal pools at the Harris Center, May 1st, 1- 4 p.m.

Gas Pipeline Update:

FPC still working on presentations to be held in May.

Kinder Morgan & PSNH will be meeting at the Town Hall a week from today at 8 p.m. Town boards will be seated up front.

Open Space Committee – Updates:

Ann McBride called Zug about West property easement. One member of the family has died without a will, putting things hold.

Site Walk Reports:

None

Budget Reports:

\$258 expended: \$250 for consulting from Moosewood Ecological, and \$8.94 to Sable, postage for FERC mailings. YTD net pay: \$336.33

Planning Board:

No news

Other Business:

Lindquist reported that a Trail Day will be held May 16th at Gap Mt.

Correspondence:

Letter of thanks from Monadnock Conservancy Re KMTF conservation easement, plus an invoice for \$10,188; thank you note from Northeast Wilderness Trust for \$500 donation toward Slavic Wildlife & Wilderness Sanctuary; Monadnock Conservancy annual report.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. Next meeting: May 18, 2015

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Sable, Secretary